AIPAC SPEECH – MINISTER OF DEFENSE

EHUD BARAK (1,844 WORDS) – DRAFT 5

Compliments and thanks

- Thank you for such a warm welcome.
- What an indescribable feeling to be once again surrounded by so many true friends in the capital of the world's greatest democracy.
- Members of the Administration, Members of Congress, Ambassadors Michael Oren and Dan Shapiro, distinguished ambassadors from all around the world…. Michael, Rosey, Bob, David, Howard and Richard, AIPAC members… old and young…
- Good evening to all of you and thank you for having me.
- Members of Congress, if only I had time to thank all of you individually, but there are **more** congressmen and women here than could fill our whole Knesset! **But** I am certainly **not** complaining…

- It is **your** toil and **your** graft – **your** unwavering support – that keeps ***us*** safe. I have six humble words for all of you: Thank you, thank you, thank you.
- I would like to express my personal appreciation to President Obama and Secretary Panetta for their **resolute** backing of Israel.
- History will surely record your immeasurable contribution to the **truly** special relationship between our peoples.
- On behalf of the people of Israel, I wish Secretary Hagel **all the best** in his new role.
- I have no doubt that as Secretary of Defense he will **serve his country** with the **same pride** and **honor** with which he served both on the battlefield and in Congress.
- Moving from the Hill – down to the grassroots, the young activists we see – and hear – in this room today: **You are the future**!
- When I speak to young American supporters of Israel, it is the depth of your commitment that is so uplifting. A commitment which is so lucidly **dictated** by the head… yet so deeply underpinned by the heart… A commitment to ideals, which in

the age of the iPhone and Facebook could be brushed quietly into a corner, is LOUDLY on show this evening. **You are the future!**

US-Israel Relationship and Two Way Street

- As the former Prime Minister and Chief of Staff of the IDF, and as the Defense Minister of the State of Israel for the past six years, I have witnessed firsthand the **importance** of **solidarity**.
- The display of **united strength** in the **face** of determined enemies is crucial to both **win wars**… and **maintain peace**.
- Very **few** figures have embodied the strength and solidarity I am talking about more than my friend **Dan Inouye**. Dan – **may his memory be blessed** – was a **true hero** of democracy. A **passionate friend** of Israel. And a **dear friend** to me.
- As we say in Hebrew – אתה חסר חבר – you are… and will be missed. Thank you for everything Dan.
- Back in 2008, with the election of President Obama – the word that aroused the senses of this nation was **'Change'**.
- In today's Middle East ***change*** is all around us.

- **Change** can be **stirring**.
- **Change** can be **frightening**.
- But one poignant constant that **accompanies change**… is ***opportunity***.
- However, to paraphrase J.D. Salinger's Catcher in the Rye, there are some things that should **stay the way they are**… "Things" --- he said --- "that you should stick in one of those big glass cases and just leave them alone."
- Israel's **strong**, **open** and extremely **representative** democracy, for example, is inside one of those big glass cases… it is **not going anywhere**!
- Alongside democracy in this glass case is our **capacity** to **defend** ourselves.
- Thanks to the **rock solid** US-Israel relationship, this capacity has been guaranteed for generations to come!

Iron-Dome + Tough Neighborhood

- I was born under the British mandate 71 ago. Today… I am finishing my tenure as the Minister of Defense of an **independent Jewish state… which** – in conjunction with the US – will be able to **intercept incoming missiles… in SPACE**.

- Just last week on the shores of the Mediterranean, we – the US **and** Israel – conducted a successful flight test of the Arrow 3 interceptor.
- We already have an Israeli designed system – the Iron Dome – that with US support, recently intercepted over 400 incoming terrorist rockets; above our heads.
- The **technology** and **velocities** involved are the equivalent of hitting a bullet with a bullet!
- In my life, I have seen a lot. I **fought** terrorists dressed up as a pretty young girl in Lebanon…
- However, I could not have **dreamed** of some of the technologies we have today already saving both American ***and*** Israeli lives!
- Indeed with all this talk of change, the State of Israel simply would not be the strong island of stability without one crucial **constant.**
- YOU
- The United States of America.
- The US and Israel are more than friends. We are family. We look **after** each other. And we will continue to look **out** for each other.

Middle East Tough Neighborhood

- And in our tough neighborhood – guaranteeing our qualitative military edge has never been so important.
- We have a new regime in Egypt. A regime which we hope will stay true to the peace accords; a **strategic anchor** of **peace** and **security**; **not just** for Israel, but for the entire region.
- In Syria, the **winds** of **change** are self-evident, yet their direction remains unpredictable. So far they have taken the lives of **over 60,000 victims**.
- Israel will remain **vigilant**; monitoring carefully all the developments on our northern border.
- Our other neighbor in the north, Lebanon – a country **synonymous** with change – is as unstable as ever with an unaccountable terrorist organization – Hezbollah – controlling half the country.
- After **over a decade of constant rocket fire** from Gaza, the residents of Israel's south are **finally** seeing some change. Since Operation Pillar of Defense they have experienced three full months of quiet. Despite the tailwind Hamas received from

the Muslim Brotherhood across the region; Hamas received a painful blow during the operation.

- The IDF acted with **precision** and **professionalism**, restoring the deterrence to the Hamas regime while securing peace and quiet for the citizens of Israel's south.

<u>Not Zero-Sum game - Regional Security – Palestinians - Iran</u>

- At the same time, in Judea and Samaria – recent disturbances and uncertainty could be the precursor to change.
- **However**, during the last six years, we have **worked hard**, through **close** cooperation with the Palestinian security forces and the US, to maintain crucial stability in the West Bank.
- We call on President Mahmud Abbas to **join** hands with us in securing the region, and to **come back** to the negotiating table.
- In this time of **great uncertainty,** we must seek out the seeds of hope and opportunity. And today, we have an historic opportunity to put an end to this conflict.
- An opportunity to strengthen the voices of the moderates on both sides.

- An opportunity to strengthen the voices of democracy. Our sages teach us that *if not now… when?*
- President Abbas – now is the time to start talking!
- We must **demarcate** a line within the land of Israel… Within which we have the settlement blocs and a **solid** Jewish majority for generations to come.
- And on the other side of this line; a viable, independent Palestinian state.
- Two democratic nation states, living side by side in peace and security, in the heart of the Middle East; A two-state solution. The only solution.
- Peace with the Palestinians can serve as a platform upon which the regional actors can unite… unite in the face of a truly global challenge.
- Six years ago, the Radical Islamic Republic of Iran had **800kg of low enriched Uranium**.
- Today, ladies and gentlemen, they have **6.5 metric tons** of LEU, and approximately **200kg of Uranium enriched to 20%**; part of which has been reprocessed into fuel rods.
- A **militarized nuclear** Iran is not only an issue for Israel; it is an issue for the **entire** world.

- It means the end of **any** conceivable non-proliferation regime. **Saudi Arabia**, **Turkey** and **Egypt** will quickly follow suit.
- The countdown towards nuclear materials falling into the hands of terrorists will begin.
- Iran will **speed up** its **exportation** of **terror** - in Afghanistan, India, Yemen, Somalia, as well as in Europe and South America. Their global proxies will become emboldened.

- We **cannot** forget that this extreme regime also threatens to wipe Israel **out the pages of history**.
- The Iranians are **determined** to **defy** and **deceive** the rest of the world in order to become a nuclear power.
- And while diplomatic efforts continue, and sanctions are **unprecedented**, **all options remain** on the table.

- And we expect all those who say it… to mean it… ladies and gentlemen… **We mean it.**

Vision and Society

- Israel, surrounded by this geopolitical earthquake, has been experiencing its own tremors of change: A **renaissance** of political **activism**, an **outburst** of **social participation**.
- Just under two years ago we witnessed the people of Israel taking to the streets… demanding social justice, demanding a redistribution of the economic and social burden: A fairer slicing of the pie.
- And then just last month – **no less than 53** new members of the Knesset were sworn in. That is nearly 50% of the *old*… **out** – and of course nearly 50% of the *new*… **in**.
- **That** is what I call democracy in action. A democracy *I* can be proud of. A democracy *you* can be proud of.
- Winston Churchill said, "to ***improve*** is to change; to ***be*** **perfect…** is to change often."
- At the rate by which we have elections – we must be nearing perfection soon!

Personal and Sikkum

- The father of Western philosophy Socrates understood the importance of personal change. “Let he who would move the world… first move himself.”
- The time has come for me to move on. I have spent half a century serving my country. I often rub my eyes in disbelief when I look at what we – as a nation – have achieved… all in under 65 years.
- We have an **agile** and **adaptive** high-tech and export oriented economy.
- Our start-up culture flourishes on an ***eruption*** of talent and an underlying entrepreneurial spirit amongst our youth.
- The future is bright, and my vision for Israel is clear.
- A **strong**, self-confident, flourishing Jewish and democratic state, living in peace and security with its neighbors.
- An exemplary **state** at the cutting edge of world societies in the disciplines of science, technology, education, culture, infrastructure, quality of life and, finally, standard of living.
- Ladies and gentlemen, we are at a **decisive juncture in our history**…

- May we have the **strength** and **courage** to make those tough decisions for the future **peace** and **security** of the State of Israel.
- We are in this boat together, and there is **simply no other nation on earth** with which we would rather share the ride.
- Thank you…